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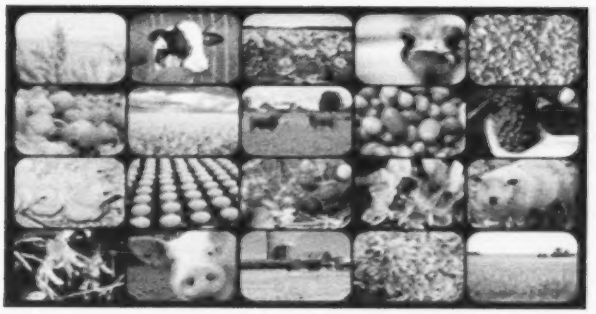
Saskatchewan remains the breadbasket of Canada



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The following symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

. not available for any reference period
.. not available for a specific reference period
... not applicable
0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p} preliminary
^{r} revised
x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E} use with caution
F too unreliable to be published
* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Saskatchewan remains the breadbasket of Canada

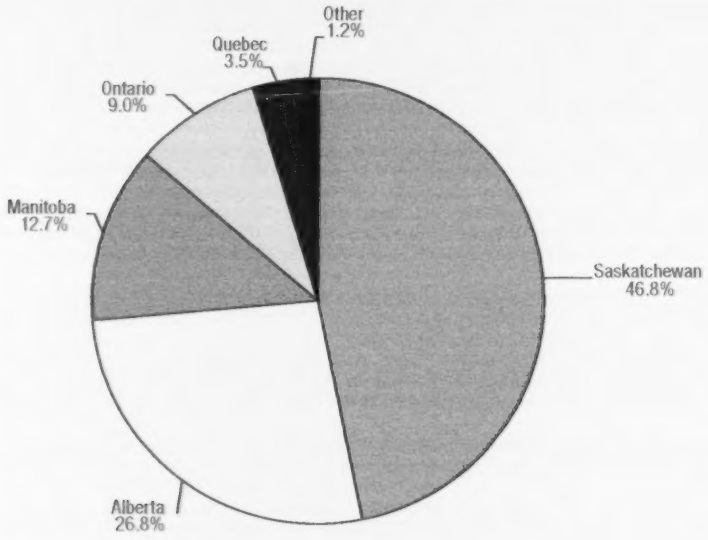
Almost 91% of the total cropland in Saskatchewan was seeded with field crops in 2016. Saskatchewan accounted for more than two-fifths of Canada's total field crop acreage with 36.7 million acres, more than Alberta and Manitoba combined. Canola and spring wheat (excluding durum) remained the two largest crops in terms of area, while lentil area more than doubled from 2011.

Despite fewer farms in Saskatchewan in 2016 from five years earlier, the average farm size increased 7.0%.

The average farm operator age in Saskatchewan rose from 54.2 years to 55.0 years, with 9.7% of all operators being under the age of 35. The proportion of female farm operators increased to one quarter of all farm operators in Saskatchewan.

While the number of beef cattle declined from five years earlier, Saskatchewan remained the second largest beef cattle producing province in Canada.

Chart 1
Provincial distribution of total field crop area, 2016



Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

Saskatoon berries accounted for over half of the fruits, berries and nuts area in the province, while sweet corn was the largest field vegetable crop by area.

Primary agriculture represented 9.7% of provincial gross domestic product (agricultural GDP) in 2013. This percentage increased to 13.5% when agricultural input and service providers, primary producers, food and beverage processors, and food retailers and wholesalers industries were taken into account (Statistics Canada. 2013. Special tabulation, based on 2013 gross domestic product by industry – provincial and territorial).

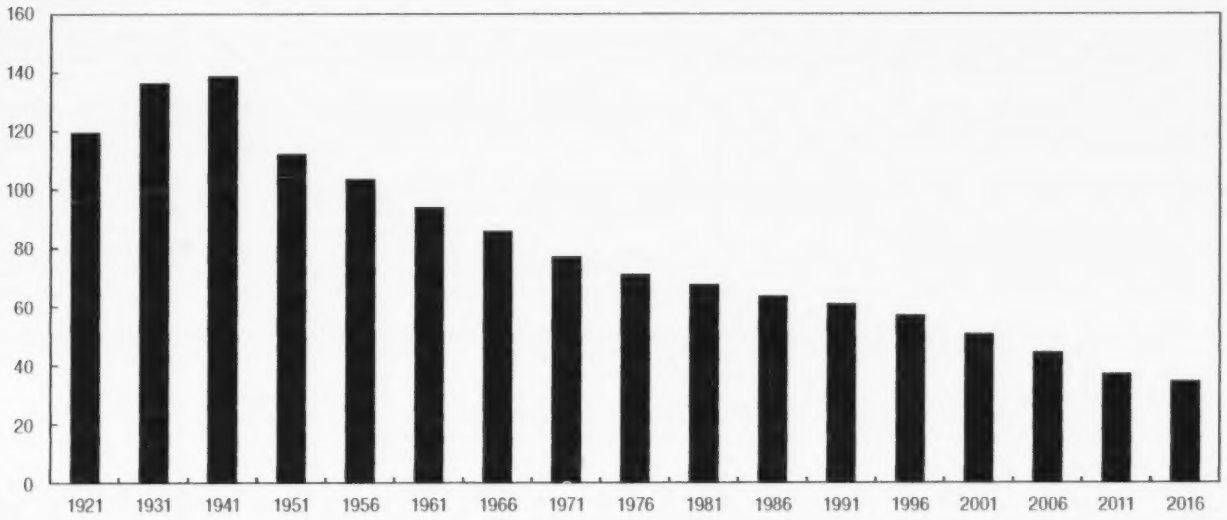
Agricultural operations in Saskatchewan employed 25,927 people in 2015.

The decrease in the number of farms in Saskatchewan is less pronounced than in the 2011 Census

The 2016 Census of Agriculture counted 34,523 census farms in Saskatchewan, down 6.6% from 2011, and higher than the decline at the national level (-5.9%). However, the percentage decrease in Saskatchewan was lower than the 2011 Census (-16.6%).

Chart 2
Total number of agricultural operations, Saskatchewan, 1921 to 2016

number of operations (thousands)



Sources: CANSIM tables 004-0002 and 004-0204.

Total farm area constant, area of cropland increases

The total farm area over which farmers had stewardship in Saskatchewan stayed constant (-0.1%) between 2011 and 2016 at 61.6 million acres. Since 2011, rented farm area in Saskatchewan rose 15.8% to 17.0 million acres. This was the largest increase in Canada and accounted for almost three-quarters of the gain in rental area at the national level. Saskatchewan accounted for 42.4% of all rented farm area in Canada in 2016.

While the total farm area was stable, the average farm size grew from 1,668 acres in 2011 to 1,784 acres in 2016, and the area of cropland increased 11.2% to 40.5 million acres. Part of the gain in cropland was due to the return of land which had been idle from flooding at the time of the last census, but reductions in summerfallow and conversion from pasture also contributed to the gain.

Total farm area, which is land owned or operated by an agricultural operation, includes:

- cropland;
- summerfallow;
- improved and unimproved pasture;
- woodlands and wetlands;
- all other land (including idle land, and land on which farm buildings are located).

Table 1
Components of cropland in percentage, Saskatchewan, 2011 and 2016

Component of cropland	Percent of cropland[1]	
	2011	2016
Field crops	87.4	90.7
Hay	12.6	9.2
Others[2]	0.0	0.0
Total cropland	**100.0**	**100.0**

1. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
2. Includes fruits, berries and nuts, vegetables, sod and nursery.

Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

Canola is the leading crop

Saskatchewan ranked first among the provinces in terms of total field crop area, accounting for almost half of Canada's total field crop area. Field crop area rose by almost 5 million acres since 2011, the largest absolute increase in the country.

Canola was the leading field crop by area reported in Saskatchewan in 2016, followed by spring wheat (excluding durum) and lentils. Saskatchewan accounted for the largest area of these crops in Canada. By comparison, the leading field crops in 2011 were canola, spring wheat (excluding durum) and durum wheat. In 2016, the area of canola and lentils was larger than all other provinces combined. While spring wheat (excluding durum) remained the second largest crop in Saskatchewan by area, the total area fell 16.3% from 2011. Conversely, lentil production rose 106.2% over the same period.

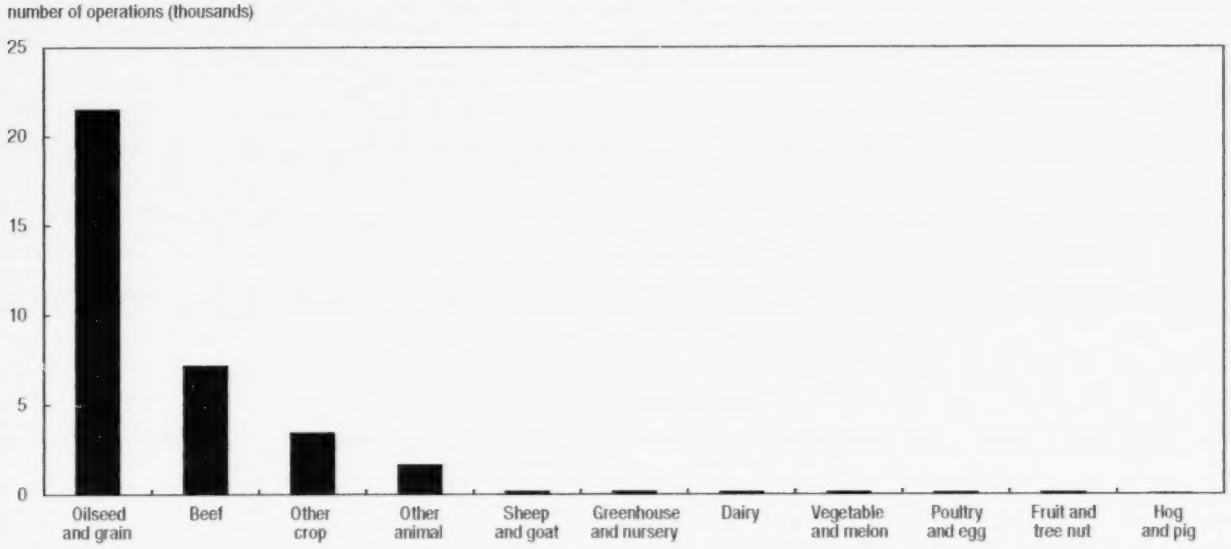
Table 2
Largest three field crops in 2016 and corresponding 2011 area, Saskatchewan, 2011 and 2016

Field crop	Acreage	
	2011	2016
Canola	9,778,799	11,069,557
Spring wheat (excluding durum)	7,991,553	6,690,998
Lentils	2,476,791	5,106,444

Source: CANSIM table 004-0213.

Oilseed and grain type farms accounted for 62.3% of all farms, and 79.7% of all gross farm receipts in Saskatchewan with $11.0 billion, the largest proportion of revenue from these types of farms nationally. Beef cattle type farms were second with 20.8% of all farms in the province and 12.3% of all gross farm receipts.

Chart 3
Total number of agricultural operations by operation type, Saskatchewan, 2016



Source: CANSIM table 004-0200.

Saskatoon berries account for half of the fruits, berries and nuts area

The total area of land in fruits, berries and nuts increased 2.0% from 2011 to 1,953 acres in 2016. Most of the increase in area was attributable to Saskatoon berries, up 13.2% from 2011 to 991 acres, accounting for half of the total fruits, berries and nuts area in the province.

Meanwhile, field vegetable area rose 23.3% to 943 acres. Sweet corn remained the leading vegetable by area, up 20.2% from 2011 to 155 acres. Saskatchewan's field vegetable area, was the ninth largest in Canada.

The greenhouse flower and vegetable production area declined 26.8% from 2011 to 1.6 million square feet in 2016 as a result of a 32.4% reduction in flower area to 1.3 million square feet. Despite the decline, almost three-quarters of the total greenhouse area in Saskatchewan was dedicated to flowers.

Saskatchewan still has the second largest cattle herd

The number of cattle in Saskatchewan decreased by 2.1% from 2011 to 2.6 million head in 2016. Despite the decrease, Saskatchewan continued to report the second largest cattle herd in the country, following Alberta.

The number of beef cattle in Saskatchewan declined 2.3% to 1.5 million head, as some producers sold stock to take advantage of higher prices and retire or shift to other aspects of agricultural production. The number of farms reporting beef cattle declined 12.1%. The number of dairy cows in Saskatchewan was relatively stable from five years earlier, edging down 0.1% from 2011 to 28,022 head in 2016. Meanwhile, the number of farms reporting dairy cows declined 12.3% to 299.

Saskatchewan ranked fifth in terms of number of pigs in Canada in 2016. The number of pigs in Saskatchewan increased 0.5% from 2011 to 1.0 million head in 2016. The growth was due to good market conditions from 2011 to 2016, which boosted the price of pigs relative to the period preceding the 2011 census.

The sheep flock declined 2.9% to 110,015 animals in 2016.

More young farm operators

There were 45,350 farm operators in Saskatchewan in 2016, down 8.3% from 2011 and exceeding the decline in the number of farms (-6.6%).

One-quarter (24.9%) of the farm operators in Saskatchewan in 2016 were women, up from 22.9% in 2011. Nationally, women accounted for 28.7% of farm operators in 2016.

From 2011 to 2016, the proportion of farm operators in the oldest age category (55 years and older) increased 6.6 percentage points to 55.9%. The proportion of young operators (under 35 years old) also rose, up 0.9 percentage points to 9.7%. Over the five-year period, the average operator age in Saskatchewan rose from 54.2 years to 55.0 years.

Table 3
Proportion of farm operators by age group, Saskatchewan, 2011 and 2016

	Percent of farm operators[1]	
Age group	**2011**	**2016**
Under 35 years old	8.8	9.7
35 to 54 years old	41.8	34.4
55 years and older	49.3	55.9
Total farm operators	**100.0**	**100.0**

1. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Source: CANSIM table 004-0239.

In 2015, 44.4% of farm operators worked more than 40 hours a week on farm operations in 2015, down from 46.6% five-years earlier, but above the national average of 37.5%.

Meanwhile, fewer farmers reported working off the farm. In 2016, 42.0% of farm operators in Saskatchewan reported having an off-farm job in 2015, down from 46.1% in 2010. Nationally, 44.4% of farm operators worked off the farm.

Saskatchewan farm operations have the most favourable expense to sales ratio

Gross farm receipts in Saskatchewan were $13.8 billion in 2015, ranking third nationally. Meanwhile, operating expenses totalled $10.8 billion. Despite an increase in expenses, the total operating profit margin for farmers in Saskatchewan was the most favourable in Canada.

On average, for every dollar in sales, farms had 78 cents in expenses in 2015 for an expense-to-receipt ratio of 0.78. In 2010, Saskatchewan's expense-to-receipt ratio was 0.76.

The ratio of expenses to receipts varied by farm type. In 2015, oilseed and grain type farms had the most favourable ratio at 0.77, deteriorating from 0.73 in 2010. The expense-to-receipt ratio for hog and pig type farms deteriorated the most from 0.87 to 0.96.

The expense-to-receipt ratio is the average amount of operating expenses incurred for a dollar in farm receipts. The ratio is calculated in current dollars.

Price indices were used to obtain constant dollar estimates of receipts, expenditures and capital values in order to eliminate the impact of price change in year to year comparison.

Census Day was May 10, 2016. Farmers were asked to report their receipts and expenses for the last complete fiscal or calendar year (2015).

Other agriculture highlights

- In Saskatchewan, 3.1% of farms reported having renewable energy producing systems in 2015, compared with 5.3% nationally.
- In Saskatchewan, 3.8% of farms reported selling agricultural products directly to consumers in 2015.
- In Saskatchewan, 27.2% of farms reported being incorporated in 2016, up from 18.5% in 2011. Incorporated farms accounted for 25.1% of the total farms in Canada in 2016.
- The 2016 Census of Agriculture marked the first time farm operators were asked to report if the farm operation had a written succession plan. In 2016, 8.8% of farms in Saskatchewan had a written succession plan, compared with 8.4% nationally.
- The proportion of farms in Saskatchewan producing organic products declined from 2.9% in 2011 to 2.5% in 2016. Nationally, farms producing organic products accounted for 2.2% of the total farms in 2016.
- In Saskatchewan, 41.5% of farms reported using automated steering technology in 2015.
- In Saskatchewan, the value of the land and buildings per acre increased 76.0% (in 2016 constant dollars) from 2011 to $1,210 per acre in 2016. However, this was well below the national average of $2,696 per acre.

Canada 150: Farming in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan joined Confederation on September 1, 1905. In 1911, the first census year in which the province of Saskatchewan was included, there were 95,013 farms reported and 28.1 million acres of farm land. Wheat (5.3 million acres) and oats for grain (2.3 million acres) were the largest field crops in terms of area. Today, Saskatchewan is the largest crop-producing province in Canada, representing 46.8% of national field crop area in 2016. The province reported 11.8 million acres of wheat in 2016, more than double the area reported in 1911. Canada is the largest producer of canola globally, and in 2016 Saskatchewan accounted for 53.7% of Canadian canola area.

Statistics Canada would like to thank the farming community of Saskatchewan for their participation and assistance in the 2016 Census of Agriculture.

Census farm: An operation is considered a census farm (agricultural operation) if it produces at least one of the following products intended for sale:

- crops: hay, field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed;
- livestock: cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, game animals, other livestock;
- poultry: hens, chickens, turkeys, chicks, game birds, other poultry;
- animal products: milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat;
- other agricultural products: Christmas trees, sod, greenhouse or nursery products, mushrooms, honey or bees, maple syrup and its products.

The data for Yukon and the Northwest Territories are not included in the national totals because of the different definition of an agricultural operation in the territories and confidentiality constraints. The data for Yukon and the Northwest Territories are presented separately.

Farm type: Farm type is established through a procedure that classifies each census farm according to the predominant type of production. This is done by estimating the potential receipts from the inventories of crops and livestock reported on the questionnaire and determining the product or group of products that make up the majority of the estimated receipts. For example, a census farm with total potential receipts of 60% from hogs, 20% from beef cattle and 20% from wheat, would be classified as a hog and pig farm. The farm types presented in this document are derived based on the 2012 North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS).

P.T.O. hp (Power Take Off horsepower): The measure of the power available from a tractor engine to drive implements.

Gross farm receipts: The Census of Agriculture measures gross farm receipts for the calendar or accounting year prior to the census. Gross farm receipts (before deducting expenses) in this analysis include:

- receipts from all agricultural products sold;
- program payments and custom work receipts.

The following are not included in gross farm receipts:

- sales of forestry products (for example: firewood, pulpwood, logs, fence posts and pilings);
- sales of capital items (for example: quota, land, machinery);
- receipts from the sale of any goods purchased only for retail sales.

Total operating expenses: The Census of Agriculture measures operating expenses for the calendar or accounting year prior to the census. Total operating expenses include:

- any expense associated with producing agricultural products (such as the cost of seed, feed, fuel, fertilizers, etc.).

The following are not included in total operating expenses:

- the purchase of land, buildings or equipment;
- depreciation or capital cost allowance. Depreciation represents economic "wear and tear" expense. Capital cost allowance represents the amount of depreciation written off by the tax filer as allowed by tax regulations.

2010 to 2015: Some data refer to a reference period other than Census Day. For example, for financial data the reference period is the calendar or accounting (fiscal) year prior to the census.

Farm operator: According to the census, a farm operator is any person responsible for the management decisions made for an agricultural operation as of May 10, 2016.

Contact information

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).